

# Position Paper on the Incompatibility of Christianity and New Age Spiritual Energy Healing

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As Christians who desire to honor and glorify God in accordance with His revelation of Himself and to entrust ourselves to His sovereign grace and goodness, we desire to be transformed by His Spirit to discern between good and evil, truth and error, and distinguish every practice or worldview which does not honor Him according to the Scriptures. This paper is written to set forth what the elders of Emerald Bible Fellowship believe the Scriptures to teach concerning spiritual energy healing and all techniques, methods, and treatments associated with moving, manipulating, or aligning “spiritual energy” as a means of spiritual, physical, or psychic health or wholeness. In summary, we believe the Scriptures present no teaching that can be shown to condone such means, but rather it clearly presents such methods as contrary to His will, desires, and commands. Thus, God condemns techniques of spiritual healing, giving no corresponding truth by which a Christian should ever justify the use of or the participation in spiritual energy healing.

We begin and end this paper with this foundational truth of the gospel: The greatest need for humanity is not physical comfort or a restful mind, but rather a reconciled relationship between a sinful broken humanity and the holy glorious God. The real spiritual threat is not illness or anxiety, but sin (Romans 5:12-15), a rebellion against God and a refusal to come to Him on His terms: humble dependence for His glory. Death, in all its forms, comes because humanity sinned and was cursed (Genesis 3) with death, and God’s Creation has been subjected to futility and held in bondage to decay until the redemption of humanity through Jesus would be completed (Romans 8:20-21). Because of humanity’s sin, we suffer and we die. Any spiritual healing which avoids the centrality of humanity’s sin as the source of our problems and does not move us *at all times* to repentant and humble dependence upon Jesus for all things and for His glory is to be avoided. We also believe that this foundational truth must underpin our use of medicines as well. It does humanity no ultimate good to go to condemnation without Jesus while pain-free and sound in body (Matt 18.9; Mk 8.36). Thus, even in our use of medicines for physical comfort and healing we must understand and teach that our true hope of wholeness and peace lies only in Jesus Christ crucified for us and raised for our justification to always intercede on our behalf and we come to Him through repentant faith alone.

What distinguishes the eastern practice of Yoga from simply stretching the muscles in the morning? What would make a martial art acceptable for the Christian to practice if its foundations lie in the eastern philosophy of pantheism? As we use the terms for many practices and methods in this paper, the primary distinction of what makes a practice redeemable (able to be altered and accepted by the Christian to bring glory to Jesus Christ) or irredeemable (unable to be accepted or practiced by Christians without a reliance upon an idolatrous power and the acceptance of error as truth) comes down to a single basic premise: any practice which relies upon the moving, channeling, unleashing, activating, alignment, balancing, or unlocking of a *spiritual energy or force for healing or wholeness* is irredeemable for the Christian. Some methods, such as stretching using poses from yoga or the practice of *karate* or Kung Fu, being used for physical exercise and physical strengthening of the body or competitive endeavors but are

not attempting or reliant upon the manipulation of *spiritual* energy or life force can be redeemable by the Christian. This will also distinguish medicinal treatments, which alter physical processes or properties within the body and have known and testable physiological causes and effect, but do not move into the spiritual or psychic realm as the means of *holistic* health by means, methods, or techniques meant to alter spiritual power(s).

This manipulation of power is demonstrably different from prayer, which is an entreaty or request made *to a person* with His own will who may or may not grant our request. God is a Father of those who believe in Jesus, and we can approach Him as child who asks for what he or she needs. However, God is not coerced or manipulated by our actions or the words which we use. He may answer “no” to our requests, as He did to Jesus when he asked for “this cup to pass from him” in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:42). When Jesus entreated the Father to avoid the cross, he asked with the affirmation, “not my will, but Yours be done.” Can it be said that there was sin in Jesus’ heart which kept the Father from granting His request? No. Can it be said that He didn’t ask with enough faith? No. Can it be said that He lacked passion, or persistence, or fervor? No. He sweat drops of blood and entreated the Father numerous times. There is no expectation of getting what he asked for, but there is only an expectation that the Father’s will is preferable, good, and will be done. This is the primary difference between prayer and mantra.

Our desire in this paper is that these truths of God’s revealed Word might enable every believer to be aware and discerning in their evaluation of such methods. We desire that they might recognize their contradiction to the biblical worldview of truth and redemption and wholeness, and might reject all things that oppose the Scriptures, electing to adopt a Christ-centered and God-exalting view of health, wholeness, and hope which relies upon God as He has graciously revealed Himself.

All energy healing techniques including but not limited to: Therapeutic Touch, Touch for Health, Polarity, Reiki, Cleansing or Smoothing the Aura, and any other method used to balance or unlock the *chi* (Qi,ki) or *prana* (a divine cosmic energy believed to be taken in by the breath) such as Ayurveda, psychic acupuncture or acupressure, shiatsu, chi kung (qi gong) and much of traditional Chinese “medicine” are based upon the foundational principle of the manipulation of *spiritual* energy or a “*life force*.” If such a treatment is based upon manipulating such a “life force”, they are opposed to Christ. These are usually, but not always, associated with spatially located chakras, or “centers of energy” within the human body. These are said to be located in 7 different locations up the center of the body and in the head. It is usually through these particular body locations that *spiritual energy healers will attempt to manipulate spiritual energy* through the placement of hands, crystals, needles, or other objects. Sometimes this “spiritual energy” or “life force” is given a Christianized name, such as “spirit” or “soul”, or even occasionally designated as “Jesus” designed to engender participation and acceptance by Christians. Some of the above techniques have been coupled with scientific medical treatments and even given rise to biological theories on how they might work (acupuncture, etc.). Regardless of the names or the acceptability by other so-called “Christians”, the basic principles of these methods assert that healing comes through balancing, unblocking, manipulating, moving, and/or channeling an *energy* or *universal life force* which replaces the personal God, or is thought to be God or from God. We believe these theories and

philosophies to be deceptions from the Enemy and opposed to Christ Jesus. The Scriptures tell us that there will be declarations and designations of “other Jesus” that depart from the true Christ Jesus, and that these are deceptions meant to lead believers astray from a pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor 11:3-4; Galatians 1:6-7).

These healing methods are not just techniques that are spiritually or morally neutral, but rather are interwoven spiritual philosophies about who God is, who Christ is, and what true health is. They are not based upon testable science or biological medicine that can be verified, but upon *spiritual beliefs*. None of these beliefs point to the true God of the Bible but rather to a universalistic view that God is in all things *in the same way (panentheism, “God is in all”)* or that God is all things (*pantheism, “all is God”*). They confuse the Creator with Creation and thus are, at their root, the idolatrous exchange of which we were warned by the apostle Paul in Romans 1:18-32. They may speak of Jesus and the Spirit, but only as a cosmic power *which can be manipulated or controlled by technique* of hands or words or objects, as a cosmic Christ whose primary purpose is to alleviate pain not to call to repentant faith in Him as Savior and King. In fact, sin and the need for salvation are usually denied and *always unnecessary* in all spiritual energy healing techniques. Repentance and submission to the rule of Christ Jesus is neglected, if not rejected, and this makes all these methods something to be avoided by those who want to honor Christ Jesus.

In summary, there are three primary elements of spiritual energy healing methods that make these synergisms contradictory to God as He is revealed in the Scriptures and particularly through His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Sovereign Christ. 1) All things are connected by a universal life force, 2) Humans have the ability and power to “unlock” or “balance” this universal life force, they just need to be taught the proper techniques, and 3) a complete neglect (at best) or intentional resistance to (at worst) the call to repentance from sins and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to whom we gratefully and joyfully entrust ourselves to in humble obedience.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is a strong and unequivocal distinction between the Creator and the Created. There is a God, and we are not him. That is, there is no universal life force that flows through all things by which life exists that can be manipulated or channeled or controlled. It is true that Creation is dependent upon God for its existence and its maintenance. He upholds all things and they exist through Him (1 Cor 8:6; John 1:3; Acts 17:28; Heb 1:3; Col 1:16-17). However, there is a huge ontological difference in stating that God created and *upholds* all that exists, thus Creation is dependent upon Him, and God created and *indwells* all that exists. We reject the latter and embrace the former based upon Scripture (Gen 1:1; Col 1:16; Psa 102:25; Neh 9:6; 2 Pet 3:10). God is the Creator, existing before and distinctly apart from the Creation. He is unique in existence and nothing shares in this infinitude but God Himself. God is holy, creation is profane. God is infinite, creation is finite. God is transcendent, creation is fallible. God is absolutely independent, creation is utterly dependent. We believe that God is involved and acts upon creation (imminence) to uphold it and preserve it and maintain it, but reject that He, or any universal life force, is *within* creation. Thus, the Spirit of God is not *within* the tree, the rock, the deer, or the unredeemed person. This changes when one turns to Christ and receives the Holy Spirit, so that it is true that believers are said to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within

them. However, even with this biblical truth, it cannot be said that the Holy Spirit is *contained* within the human, but rather that He is working in a mysterious and unique way *His own will and work*. Thus, the **Holy Spirit cannot be manipulated by technique or method, nor does He need to be “released” or “allowed” or “activated” in order to move, as if profane man had control of the holy God or could frustrate His will.** He is the only Creator and the Sovereign God who does as He pleases in accordance with the will of the Father and Son as one God. Thus, even if a force or power is *called* or *named* “God” or “Jesus” or the “Holy Spirit”, if it can be coerced, unlocked, manipulated, moved, or controlled by a technique or mantra or phrase, then it is surely not the personal sovereign God of the Bible (Isa 45:5-9; Lam 3:38; Dan 4:35; Psa 115:3; 135:6; Rom 9:15-20).

Therefore, we believe according to the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is not *in* all people and neither He nor His power can be transferred from one to another by any means or manipulation or technique or method, including the chanting of mantras (even Scriptural words), the precise placement of hands or objects upon the body (Reiki, shiatsu, acupressure, TT, crystals), or the appeal to unblock or balance any life force or force of illness/imbalance. When Jesus exercised His authority over the spiritual realm, He dealt with demonic forces with personality, with whom He interacted and commanded and rebuked by His sovereign authority. When He exercised His authority over illness, He passed on no techniques to His apostles, but only His authority “in His name”. Even here, the phrase “in His name” is not a mantra that has power in itself, as the sons of Sceva proved in Acts 19. Again, God is *petitioned* for healing and all His healing comes *from His will and His ability without the necessity of any technique* or an appeal to manipulate spiritual energy. We pray, asking God, our Father who loves us personally, to come to our aid (to pray literally means “to ask”) and *God moves according to His own wisdom and will, without manipulation, coercion, or releasing.*

Any healing efforts which are (1) based upon technique or a precise method, (2) can be taught or passed down through training or “attunement”, (3) rely upon balancing or unblocking spiritual energy by such methods, (4) avoid the sinfulness of humanity as the foundational problem of all human pain and suffering, and (5) avoid the need for repentance and faith in Jesus, is to be avoided as, at minimum, a distraction from the Enemy, if not an active deception, but surely as something that is not from the Lord Jesus. Jesus spoke of sin and sickness together and of man’s need for Him, the personal Savior-King, not an impersonal transference of energy or “spirit.” “And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:31-32) It is also clear that simply because a technique may “work”, or bring about the alleviation of physical suffering does not imply nor confirm that the healing or the healer is consistent with Christ. Jesus states clearly that there will be miracle workers who prophesy, exorcise demons, and do works of power using His name but do not know Him. They will stand condemned on that day for their refusal to submit to Him completely (Matt 7:21-23). Pharaoh’s magicians could perform mighty works, but they were not of the Lord. Simon was called “the great power of God” but relied upon magic and was condemned by the apostles (Acts 8), and the anti-Christ uses great powers to deceive (2 Thess 2:9). Thus, we see that the *effect* of a healing technique does not imply that it is from God, nor does it imply that its worker is righteous, nor its effect complete.

We also believe that any method or ministry that implies either explicitly or implicitly that the primary goal of God is the healing of humanity's woes has missed the gospel goal and the purpose of God. God's purpose and His primary goal of all that He does is to glorify and exalt His great name (Is 43:6-7; 48:9-11; Ezek 20:8-9; Ex. 14:4; Eph 1:5-6; John 12:27). When this means God "creates vessels of wrath prepared for destruction", then He has every right to do so, and does (Rom 9:6-10:4). The fact that He shows mercy to any of us is due solely to His incredible grace. We must not picture God as a longing lover who wants to heal everybody, save everybody, and restore everybody as His highest desire but is powerless to accomplish it. He is not held back by man's will or man's choice. He transcends and reigns over it in every way. He does not submit to man, but requires that man submit to Him. Any position that believes that God is simply held back from doing what He would really like to do by any feeling, belief, or action of man rather than being held back by the desire for His glory is anathema and a rejection of God's independence, holiness, concupiscence, and omnipotence and thus is also by diminishing the grandeur of His love, mercy, and grace a rejection thereof.

Thus, even in the Christian's suffering, there is mercy. God mercifully is working toward shaping us into the image of His Son, through a deepening knowledge of and dependence upon Him. In seeing His glory through our suffering, we rejoice with a joy inexpressible and full of glory (Rom 8:26; 1 Pet 1:8) *as we believe in Him and take Him at His word*. It is in this *believing* that we find true hope, joy, and peace (Rom 15:13).

The Scriptures teach us that God will often bring suffering to persons purposefully to accomplish His greater purpose of revealing Himself, moving a person to repentance and faith in Him, and thus creating or restoring worshippers who suffer well by hoping in Him (Job, 2 Cor 12:7, 1 Cor 5:5). Some of these were even led to death (Acts 5, 1 Cor 11:30). We are told to share in Christ's sufferings, not avoid them (2 Tim 1:8; 2 Cor 1:5-10; Col 1:24; Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 4:13). Suffering is God's way of making us holy, like Jesus, and is never to be avoided by ungodly means, but rather with dependent faith and hope in the LORD. Thus, we work to avoid suffering when possible, as its avoidance is provided by God without sacrificing faithfulness to Him, but we also recognize that honoring Him purely is our primary purpose and trusting Him enough to do things the way that He has said is the sign of faith in Him. This means avoiding spiritual energy healing techniques which depersonalize Him and substitute the necessary task of repentance and submissive faith with manipulation of power through technique, which amounts to magic and sorcery which are clearly forbidden in Scripture (Acts 19:18-19; Gal 5:20; Rev 21:8).

We believe that true healing, what each person truly and ultimately needs, is deliverance from sin and a reordering of one's life to the worship of God through Jesus Christ. This is holistic healing in its truest sense. This is where joy is found and the power to persevere through suffering is accomplished. This healing only comes through recognizing Jesus as the Son of God, the savior from sin, the King over one's life who offers forgiveness and reconciliation with God through repentant faith in Him and Him only based upon the blood of His cross and the power of His risen life as received by faith alone and without any mediation but faith in His authoritative Word (2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:9-20; John 11:25-26).

The following outline is a brief overview of my thoughts regarding Spiritual Energy Healing

1. One universal life force (energy, Spirit, chi)
  - a. Creator and created are not united as one
    - i. God is distinct from His creation
    - ii. He is involved and imminent, near, but is not “one” with it
  - b. Any method or worldview that bases itself upon this “oneness” of all things is contradictory to the Word of God.
    - i. We do not share commonness with Satan (2 Cor 6:14-7:1/1 Cor 10:15-22) – what is called “life-energy” or “Buddha” or “chi” or “universal Spirit” and also claims to be “Jesus”, we are not to participate in. [2 Cor 11.4 “another Jesus”]
    - ii. No matter the name attached to it (Jesus, Buddha, Spirit, Holy Spirit, energy, chi, life-force, etc.)
2. Manipulation of spiritual energy by means of method/technique
  - a. As opposed to the Word of God, manipulation of spirit through technique (learned or passed down) of touch/positioning or potion is magic and is anathema (Gal 5:20; Acts 19:18-19; Rev 9:21)
  - b. Any “spiritual” means is distinctly different than the natural sciences and should be distinguished as such
    - i. “spiritual methods” fits those “therapies” that manipulate spiritual energy and are not testable by scientific observation and method
      1. I distinguish these from prayer, which is a request of God to do something, not a method or manipulation through technique
      2. Just as mantra-like prayers are anathema, so are technique of touch, crystals, potions, or any other physical means of manipulating spiritual realities
    - ii. Anecdotal evidence of a method’s effectiveness is the weakest form of evidence, and yet is the sole evidence for such therapies (placebo effect) [Effectiveness does not necessarily mean that God is behind it – Pharaoh’s magicians were effective, Jewish priests cast out demons apart from Jesus name, Antichrist will produce false signs, wonders, power, Simon (Acts 8) was regarded as “the Great Power of God”, but his power lay in magic, not God]
  - c. We reject the idea that Jesus and the apostles’ “laying on of hands” was somehow technique or manipulation of any spiritual concept, but was a means of identifying with the sick and the ill as brothers
    - i. Jesus is never indicated as handing down a technique, but rather His authority (Matt 10:1; Luke 9:1-19)
    - ii. This authority to heal was always used as the evidence for the proclamation of the Kingdom of God’s arrival (Luke 9, Matt 10)
    - iii. Thus, any healing which is done in the name of Jesus is intended to bring people to submit to King Jesus as their King through repentance and faith in Him for the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God
    - iv. The Spirit of God cannot be manipulated, but must be *implored* through prayer, not technique (Acts 8:19ff)
3. Overall goal of God vs. physical healing or emotional rest as the end (ends/means)
  - a. “if it works, how can it be bad?”
    - i. Simply because people feel better does not imply that the work or the means is of God
    - ii. The goal of God is His glory through repentant sinners’ salvation by His grace, not the physical wholeness of spiritual dead people
    - iii. There is also the impact of the placebo effect, which is 30% effective for most pain
      1. There is great question as to how effective these spiritual techniques are given the placebo effect (how many have cured cancer, raised the dead, made the lame walk, opened the blinded eyes, etc. Most are helping with headaches or minor body pains)

- b. Jesus' words that healers, preachers, and exorcists may not be known by Him (Matt 7:21-23) even though they did these things "in His name"
    - i. Thus, something done in His name does not necessarily indicate that it is honoring nor pleasing to Him.
  - c. In fact, God often brings brokenness, sickness, and even death, into the lives of humans in order to reveal their greater need of Him
    - i. Job
    - ii. 1 Cor 11:30 – taking advantage of His grace at the table led the LORD to remove many by death
    - iii. Acts 5 – Ananias and Sapphira
    - iv. 2 Cor 12:7 – thorn in the flesh desired to be removed, God said 'no'
    - v. 1 Cor 5:5 – handed over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that spirit may be saved
  - d. We are told "share in Christ's sufferings"
    - i. 2 Tim 1:8 – share in the suffering for the gospel by the power of God
    - ii. 2 Cor 1:5-10 – sharing in Christ's suffering so that we might share in His comfort through faith
    - iii. Col 1:24; Phil 3:10; 1 Pet 4:13
4. Any healing which denies or avoids the foundation of brokenness, sin, and the means of its solution, repentant faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, is insufficient and to be avoided
- a. The real spiritual threat is not illness or anxiety, but sin, a rebellion against God and a refusal to come to Him on His terms: humble dependence for His glory

Just some disjointed thoughts:

- Assuming there is a ‘universal life force’
  - If so, what proof that man can control this life force?
  - If so, what proof that man can transfer this life force
  - If so, what proof that there is a relationship between this life force and sickness
- Are God’s ‘methods’ of healing transferable or able to be duplicated?
  - Bit by a snake? – look at a bronze snake -- Numbers 21
  - Leprosy? – dip in the Jordan river seven times [ 2 Kings 5]
  - Child died? – lay on him three times and pray [ 1 Kings 17.21ff]
  - Child died? – lay on the child, mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand, get up and walk about the house, then go back and lay again on the child and wait for him to sneeze seven times [2 Kings 4.32ff]
  - Diseased? Touch Jesus’ hem, get a Kleenex from Paul (Acts 19.12); Jesus’ healed with a word, with a touch, with spit based mud, spit in the eye -- are these ‘methods’ intended to be healing methods? Many of Jesus and the 12 healings occurred through the outcasting of demons – I am certain many illnesses are not the result of ‘life forces’, but rather demonic forces
- Where might the Bible speak of this ‘life force’? Probably some would use the proof texts below
  - Psalm 104:29-30
  - Acts 17:28,29
- Is quenching or grieving the Holy Spirit indicative of ability to manipulate the Spirit?

Matt 12.27 – it appears that Jewish priests had power to cast out demons [apart from Jesus?]

But Acts 19, sons of Sceva, tried to manipulate using the name of Jesus (the presumed Pauline ‘method’)

2 Thes 2.9 – antichrist will come with false wonders, signs, and power

- In order to sanitize Eastern and occult or pagan practices one needs to consider things like:
  - Is the Lotus position of relaxation so closely identified with meditation in Hinduism or Buddhism that it becomes near impossible to divorce it from those religions or sanitize it for profane use? For example, are Satanic symbols somehow redeemable? Can you infuse Christian meaning into symbols like that? Could a Nazi symbol ever be so sanitized that it could become used for Christ-honoring purposes? 1 Corinthians 8 Paul shows that meat offered to idols, was not contaminated by its association with the idol (since an idol is nothing). But he cautioned the strong (those with a knowledge of truth) from possibly leading the weak (those without knowledge of truth) into sinning against their own conscience.
  - In the martial arts, is the meditative practice intended to call up the power or strength within oneself, rather than calling for the power of Christ in me? It seems to me there needs to be a deliberate, public, expression of one’s dependence upon and association with Christ, when using techniques so closely associated with false religions.
  - Spiritual healing *techniques* are not redeemable, since there is no corresponding truth in Scripture, but only contrary truth. The truth of God’s Word condemns, rather than redeems such technique.